

Gongwer News Service  
June 10, 2008

## PATTERSON: PROGRESS IS BEING MADE ON ENERGY BILLS

While little legislation overhauling Michigan's utility and energy regulatory system has moved so far from the Senate Energy Policy and Public Utilities Committee, its chair, [Sen. Bruce Patterson](#) (R-Canton), said committee members are working towards resolution of the issues.

But that does not necessarily mean there will be a "straight line to an outcome," Mr. Patterson said, a point he said he had also made to House [Speaker Andy Dillon](#) (D-Redford Twp.).

He also said he has been told by Senate [Majority Leader Mike Bishop](#) (R-Rochester) that while it was hoped (back in February) all the issues surrounding the complex issue of energy regulation would be reported to the full Senate by the end of June that if his committee needed more time to resolve the topic, then he should take more time.

Mr. Patterson also said the final result could forge a compromise that would include elements of a conference committee report. He said he had promised to say if he felt a conference committee would be needed in the end.

Mr. Patterson made the comments following a committee meeting that was flooded with onlookers as a rumor worked through Lansing that the committee might vote out [HB 5524](#) ■, the measure that critics charge would allow for "re-monopolization" of the state's utility industry and that supporters argue would allow for expansion of baseload energy development.

But Mr. Patterson made clear at the beginning of the committee that there would be no vote on the issue.

Afterwards he said, however, that progress was definitely being made on that bill and on [HB 5548](#) ■ and [HB 5549](#) ■, which would set renewable portfolio standards for alternative energy.

But he did not want to drive the decisions, preferring instead to let committee members, both Republican and Democratic, work on proposals.

On Tuesday, there was a long discussion in the Senate GOP weekly caucus on energy that Mr. Patterson did not attend, but he said afterwards he did not want to seem an intimidating figure on the different discussions.

The committee will meet again on Thursday.